

## NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

**Moderator: Michele Higgs**  
**September 27, 2005**  
**2:00 p.m. CT**

**Operator:** Good day and welcome to this Neighborhood Networks' conference call. Today's call is being recorded.

At this time, I would like to turn the call over to Michele Higgs. Please go ahead.

**Michele Higgs:** Thanks Keri. Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the Neighborhood Networks September conference call. The topic for today's call is "Basic Fund Development."

Some of you may know that this call is being offered again, because there was a problem with the distribution of the call-in number, with the last call, so I thank those of you who are calling in again; and, I welcome those of you who are calling in for the first time because I think that this is a very important call and information that we really wanted to get out to our Neighborhood Networks family.

Now, to go on, I'm Michele Higgs, as you heard and I'm the technical assistance coordinator with the Neighborhood Networks. I'm a member of the team that works with you to address the technical assistant's needs for the various Neighborhood Networks around the country. And I want to repeat something that we covered last week and that was, the location of all New Orleans employees. That was an issue that was of concern to us and we now know that everyone's been

located. The New Orleans Field Office Director, Marvelle Robison, announced on Tuesday, September 13th that all 85 employees of the New Orleans office have been located.

**Bennie Roth:** Oh that's wonderful.

**Michele Higgs:** Yes, isn't that great, although, most employees evacuated before Hurricane Katrina hit the city, two had to be rescued from their homes and airlifted to safety. So that's good news. I, also, want to mention that we heard from our HUD Coordinator in that area, Eleanor Payton, and they are now working in an office in Fort Worth, Texas and every thing's going along OK. Hopefully, they'll be recovering very, very soon.

Before I turn this call over to our speakers for this afternoon, I'm going to let you know that we have quite a few centers to welcome to the Neighborhood, a number of new centers. I'm going to go through them quickly, so please try to keep up. I promise not to run through them like the small print on a contract but there are a lot of them, first salute, Louisiana by starting with the Village de Memoire I and II, and with Alabama, in Cathedral Place.

There are nine centers from the state of Pennsylvania alone, University Square, Opportunities Tower III Neighborhood Networks Computer Learning Center, Hartford Village Computer Center, the Galilee Pavilion Neighborhood Networks Center, the Schoolyard Square Apartments Neighborhood Networks Center, Woodmont Gardens Neighborhood Networks Center, Woodstock Neighborhood Networks Center and Germaine Harbor Inc. Let's hear it for Pennsylvania; they're doing a good job over there.

**Bennie Roth:** All right.

**Michele Higgs:** In Minnesota there's Parkview Apartments Opportunity Center. In Wyoming there's Springhill Neighborhood Networks Center. In Kansas, there's the First Apartments Resident

Technology Center and then, in New Mexico, there's Agua Azul and we'll welcome all of those centers and offer congratulations to all.

Now, as you know, the Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool, also known as the START business plan, contains resource materials that help centers to perform the activities so important to assessing residents' interests and needs; as well as, mapping assets in the community and crafting a budget for the center. START is also a key to developing a fund raising strategy because it helps center directors cast a firm eye at their center's strengths and weaknesses. And it strengthens the center's profile as a business, making a center more attractive to potential partners.

These partnerships are essential when it's assisting residents in their pursuit of educational advancement, employment or career growth or seeking out funding opportunities. If you have questions about the START business plan or general questions pertaining to Neighborhood Networks, please call the toll free Neighborhood Networks Information Line at 888-312-2743. You can also visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site, which is [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org). I also want to remind listeners that an audio and a verbatim transcript of this call will be made available on the Neighborhood Networks site, in about two weeks.

Now, about our topic for today, "Fund Development for Neighborhood Networks Centers." You no doubt realize that a successful, vital Neighborhood Networks center doesn't spring up complete. It is worked and watched like a batch of good biscuits. You can tell I didn't have lunch, right? When you listen to the presentations from our speakers today, you'll understand how close to the truth that analogy is. In order to plan for the development and maintenance of programs, centers must plan for the development and maintenance of a fund base to sustain them.

For new and young centers, particularly, it is important to develop a strategy to provide for the nourishment and growth of the center. There are a number of ways to approach this mission and from what I understand from our speakers, the mission starts with commitment, it's fueled by passion and burns strong with persistence. There are some basics however, that will put centers on the path to success in creating a fund development strategy and our speakers, who've been in the thick of things, as this path goes, are here to share their wisdom with you.

To find out what some centers have already done to address this issue, I direct you to the Neighborhood Networks Web site, [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org). Where I found are the following success stories: From Hopkinsville, Kentucky there is a true testimony to the benefits of networking. Barbara Gordon, who's the director, relies on the services of other non-profits and the generosity of businesses, in the community, to broaden and strengthen the programs at the Chapel House Neighborhood Networks Center.

Gordon, who is a former loan officer for a local bank, brings the benefit of her expertise in banking to her work with Chapel House. Understanding that within the banking community there is a requirement that institutions give back to the communities from which they draw deposits, she knew that this could be a very good place to look for donations for the center and although Gordon acknowledges that approaching banking institutions can be an intimidated task, she recommends that centers work through that by establishing relations with individuals in other community service organizations and build up contacts that are interested in the same kinds of programs that the center is interested in.

This is a way of generating ideas and most importantly, talking with people who might be interested in working with you and your center. She mentions such groups, as Kiwanis or the Rotary, things that you know, might not come easily to mind. And there's another center in Kentucky, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where Debbie Fugate, founding director of the Abel Court

Apartments Neighborhood Networks Center, "If you want something badly enough, you'll figure out a way to make it happen.

You always hear about networking but learning how to incorporate the techniques is very helpful, in helping us achieve our short and long-term goals." And Ms. Fugate is an advocate of the elevator speech, a brief speech that defines her center's mission and goals and the time it takes to travel a few floors, in an elevator. So that whenever she meets somebody she is armed with the truth and she can tell them what her center is all about and hopefully, you know, get some benefits.

Well, I won't go on any longer because we have some interesting speakers today. I want to introduce our speakers for this afternoon and first, I have Ms. Sonya Manners, who joins us again from the Dartmouth Square Neighborhood Networks Center in Inkster, Michigan, where she's the director. I thank her for joining us this week and welcome her. Through the development of strong relationships and partnerships in the community, Dartmouth Square's been able to overcome some obstacles and celebrate notable successes.

One of those successes involves Comcast Cable but I'll let you tell it – let her tell you about that and then, I'll refer you to the Neighborhood Networks Web site for the complete success story on Dartmouth Square's recent award from the Beaumont Foundation. Once again, you can reach that site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org). And our other guest, who was affected by Hurricane Rita last time and could not join us and I'm very glad that she's with us today, is Ms. Bennie Roth. Now, she represents the property owners of the 183rd Street and 187th Street Apartments in Miami as well a number of duties that she carries and she's crafting a plan to fund the center for those properties.

Now, Ms. Roth is learning to build a strong foundation for her beginning center and she's been working with – she will, hopefully, bring out the fact that she's been working with another non-

profit to help these changes come about. And I've been anticipating this call because these presenters are keen about their efforts and I think they can communicate their enthusiasm about their programs to you.

So, I'll step back and I'll let them have the floor. Bennie, would you get started, please?

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely. Hi, my name is Bennie Roth. I am the District Manager for 183rd and 187th Street Apartments, as well as, 22nd Avenue Apartments in Miami, Florida. We have been working and building two brand-new Neighborhood Networks centers, one on each apartment complex and we are working in conjunction with another not-for-profit organization called, Portrait of Empowerment who is spearheaded and CEO'd by Commissioner Dottie Johnson, who is one of the commissioners who sits on one – the commissioner board for Opa Locka, Florida.

The programs that we are putting in place, right now, also include GED programs, run through Miami Dade Public Schools, after school program (FCAT) an after school programs. We are very, very strong in the (FCAT) – it means a great deal to Florida that the children pass the (FCAT) at certain grade levels to allow them to advance to the next grade, so the schools tend to put a very strong emphasis on that and we have about 31 children right now, at one of the schools, actual school sites and one of our centers that are benefiting from that program. In fact, Ms. Johnson and the Portrait of Empowerment took one of the schools that had a "C" rating and made it an "A" rating this year.

We work through and with, very closely, the churches in the area, as far as; funding goes for opportunities, not only for our programs but for extra opportunities, such as holidays. We have one particular church that donates a great deal to us every single year. They've just been absolutely wonderful. We work closely with the Miami Dolphins and the Marlins, to not only do camps for the kids but they also, donate to us around the holidays. Two years ago the – on one of my properties, the Miami Dolphins donated 175 turkeys, which made one turkey for every

family on the property. These kinds of things, as well as, working with the not-for-profit organizations that we throw galas every year, we do golf tournaments, we work in conjunction with, as you said, the Rotary Club and places like that to help us find our funding. We're now kind of branching out a little bit into corporations and applying quite heavily for grants and right now that's about where we are.

**Michele Higgs:** Well, you don't sound like ...

**Sonya Manners:** You said a mouthful.

**Michele Higgs:** I was going to say; you don't sound like you're getting started at all. You've been busy.

**Bennie Roth:** Well, Michele, as you and I have spoken before, you know, I've been working this. This has been a passion of mine and something I've absolutely, deep down in my heart believed in, from the day we broke ground on our community center, is to make our community – our two little communities, a much better place to live for the people that are there.

**Michele Higgs:** And it sounds like you've made quite a stride in that direction. This is terrific.

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Michele Higgs:** Sonya, do you have any comments on that?

**Sonya Manners:** Well, you know, she hit on a lot that I hope that the callers are listening to. Good afternoon everyone, this is Sonya from Michigan, the place where cars are made. OK and with that said, she hit on a lot regarding partnershiping, commitment, networking. I would just tell everyone funding, you know, everybody always look at – they say, oh we need funds, we need money, we need money but you don't have to have the money. You can find partners that will do

things for you, like donate the turkeys or donate the activities. If you have the facility, they have the instructors and you have the participants, guess what? You've got a ready-made program.

**Bennie Roth:** Exactly.

**Sonya Manners:** You may not have the money to facilitate the program but they may have that you know, so its all about networking and partnershiping. And when you're going to a corporation, you've got have your game face on. And Michele, you hit on something very important that START program. The START program is a very good, good tool to use and get acclimated with and keep updated because that is your business plan at the push of a button. How many people can say they can update their business plan daily and push it out by pushing the print button and take it to your banks or your local businesses or corporations within your area. That is an essential part to a Neighborhood Networks center surviving and thriving. It sounded like to me, Bennie, you've connected with the local schools. You've connected with the local churches. You've connected with the local businesses, major businesses, because you have the football team in your pocket and ...

**Bennie Roth:** Yes.

**Sonya Manners:** ... they want to help the children.

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely. That is – that's – no matter what state you're in, you find that they will, if you have something that's good and it's benefiting the community ...

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Bennie Roth:** ... they will absolutely be more than willing to help.

**Sonya Manners:** Right but you have to be knowledgeable in what you have. You have to sell what you have. You know, you can't go to a used car dealership trying to buy a new car.

**Bennie Roth:** Right.

**Sonya Manners:** You've got to know. You've got know the product. You've got know what you have, what commodity you have. If your commodity is, I have the facility, I have the people that are in need and you have what we need, guess what, they may be willing to give it to you. I talked, in the last conference, about philanthropists. They want to give you money. They will help you. I think Michele hit on my most recent accomplishment of the Beaumont Foundation. I believe this is the smallest grant I have ever written, but it's the most powerful one that out of all of the \$100,000 grants that I've written, this one was about 25,000 but I got the most out of it.

We have – we upgraded our little eight desktop computer lab to now at 18, computer lab, 18 units of equipment and 10 of those are Toshiba laptops, which are state-of-the-art. We are totally wireless now. We do have Comcast Cable, which was not a easy task. It was four years of begging. I mean this man said – I even got the gentleman to join my Board of Directors for the non-profit because he said if nothing else, I was pretty persistent. If he knew that there was a call on his voice mail once a week, it was my voice. I called this man once a week, every week for four years.

**Bennie Roth:** Persistence pays off.

**Sonya Manners:** Persistence pays off and now, we have free Comcast Internet access indefinitely, as long as, we're teaching. I don't care if I'm teaching you how to tie your shoes, we will be teaching for the duration of this center to keep that Internet access because that is very costly. If we had to pay for it, it would be about maybe \$400 to \$500 a month, you know.

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely, if its \$50 per computer.

**Sonya Manners:** Per computer and we have, now, 20 computers in the entire building, so that is pretty expensive. You just think about that what you're trying to get out of someone. It may not be the money. It might be what they have to offer you. I'm pretty – we've partnered with local churches. They offer various programs to the children and the adults and free services. We do food drives, just like you Bennie.

**Bennie Roth:** Yes.

**Sonya Manners:** We have done successful things like that. Toys for Tots, which is a national program, we do Toys for Tots distribution. We do food can drives. We offer free adult education classes and sometimes, there is some small fee – we want people to lock in to what you're doing, so sometimes we do charge a small fee just to make sure that they respect what they have. You've got show a value. Sometimes you've got to put a value on something, so ...

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely and during our summer camps – our summer camp programs, we do receive and we reach out to the local businesses and the local amusements and/or facilities, in the areas, and they allow us a very large discount on multiple entries into whatever the, you know, the seaquariums the ...

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Bennie Roth:** ... whatever it might be and then, the family, you know, it may be \$2 or \$3.

**Sonya Manners:** Right but you put that value on it, so then they say, oh OK, well, its not as expensive as me trying to do this on my own but guess what, my kids have an opportunity or I have an opportunity to do something. Just this summer we went to the Tiger Stadium Comerica Park, it's

a beautiful new baseball field in Detroit and some – for some of the adults and the children; it was the first time they've ever been there ...

**Bennie Roth:** Right.

**Sonya Manners:** ... but we got free tickets ...

**Bennie Roth:** That's wonderful.

**Sonya Manners:** ... and then we had a partner that purchased every last one of the kids, they gave them \$10 for food, so that was like – we had 30 kids, it was like \$300. That was really, really nice of them and these are the type of partnerships that you want to create and you want to network. Network, I advise people to network. Go to your local business Chamber of Commerce meeting. Go to your City Council meetings. Go to social gatherings for a business. If a business in your area is having a gala, go to it.

**Bennie Roth:** Go.

**Sonya Manners:** Have your business cards, have your game face on. Network what you're doing in your center. You'd be shocked. We went down to Florida for the Neighborhood Networks conference in June, the first of July or end of June and on the way back to the airport I was picking up a vehicle because me and my family stayed over. And I got to talking with my co-worker about the center and the gentleman that was in the shuttle bus was overhearing our conversation and he asked more oh, well, what is this and what is it about and I got and me being me, I got to elaborating, and we got so deep into it, we just took over the whole bus, so and before I was – before we got to the airport, we exchanged business cards and this gentleman is now donating to our center. Guess where he lives? In Maryland. Guess where I'm at? In Michigan, so you can network wherever.

**Bennie Roth:** You just never know, you never know.

**Sonya Manners:** You never know. You never know who ...

**Bennie Roth:** That's absolutely correct.

**Sonya Manners:** Right, so you have to sell what you have and be compassionate about it and feel it from the bottom of your heart. I don't believe that there's not one grant that I've – I went after for this center that we haven't gotten and now that HUD does not give out the Drug Elimination grants, the big figures and stuff like that you have to figure out how to network what you have and sell it and be compassionate about it.

**Michele Higgs:** Well, one of the things I'd also like to just interject here is that there is the – on the Neighborhood Networks Web site, there are funding ops – funding opportunities ...

**Sonya Manners:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** ... that come up, at least, once-a-week and you can get that by tapping into the Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) and just, basically, following your nose, you know, to the bottom of the page I think its first page where you will see events for the week and news of the week and there will be information on whatever funding opportunities that have come across our desk, in that week and in that section you'll find out, you know, what that grant is all about; who its for; you know, what the qualifications are; when the item is due; and that information is current, you know, as you go on to the site, so I just wanted to throw that in there ladies as another way of finding.

**Bennie Roth:** And you can also sign up to get e-mails from Neighborhood Networks.

**Sonya Manners:** Right. Now, Michele, with that being said, how I found out about the Beaumont Foundation was through Neighborhood Networks. They connected me with a conference call and they, you know, said well, I think this would be a good center that'll benefit from it and you have to create a relationship with these grant providers and that's exactly what I did. On the conference call, I let it be known that I was on that call. You have to ask the question. No question is a stupid question. The person that asks the most questions will get the prize at the end of the event, at least, I look at it like that because if I don't know, they want you. They tell you how many I's to dot, how many T's to cross, what font they want it in, how many paragraphs, the philanthropists want to give – they want to give you their money because all its going to do is benefit them, you know. They really want to give it to you, so the more they give, the better they look. So you ask those questions and you get from them what you need and in the long run you create the relationship with them; and by creating a relationship, guess what, you're locked in for the next couple of grants. That's a good – it's just, you know, all around good stories that can come out of it.

**Michele Higgs:** Yes, of course, excellent, excellent. Well, I'm going to ask real quick if Keri has anybody online for questions because I think this is a good topic and folks, after you've talked about the benefit of asking questions, there ought to be a couple out there, Keri, are there any questions?

**Operator:** Thank you Ms. Higgs. If you would like to ask a question, please press star one on your touch-tone telephone. If you're on a speakerphone, please make sure your mute button is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. Again, that is star one if you would like to ask a question. We'll pause for just a moment.

We'll go to Irma Lopez with Catholic Family Service.

**Michele Higgs:** Great. Hello Irma, how are you?

**Erma Lopez:** Good. I am so sorry, I was in the middle of a counseling session and I didn't get to start at the very beginning, so I'm kind of lost here. I am with – I'm in Amarillo, Texas with Catholic Family Service and I do housing services and my need and let me tell you, I didn't get all the conversation but I need to write a grant, to where I need an extra pair of hands to help me. I haven't been able to do entries for about two months. I'm running this show here and so, I'm getting behind on the paperwork and so, is there any grants available to where I can ask for money, so that I can have somebody else to help me?

**Michele Higgs:** Sonya, do you want to ...

**Sonya Manners:** OK, what I would suggest – you work by yourself, guess what, so do I.

**Erma Lopez:** It's something.

**Sonya Manners:** It's almost easier to go after the non-profits in your community or other organizations that are doing what you want to do.

**Erma Lopez:** We are non-profit.

**Sonya Manners:** OK but it doesn't matter if you're a non-profit, other non-profits have activities and things that they're doing that they may have too much money or not enough participants.

**Erma Lopez:** OK.

**Sonya Manners:** Instead of trying to create a wheel that's already spun ...

**Erma Lopez:** Right.

**Sonya Manners:** ... just tap in with them. Well, I'm a non-profit and we would like to do – what is it that you want to do that you're thinking that you need the money for?

**Erma Lopez:** Well, I need someone to come in and do the data entries and I need someone to come in and do follow-ups for me.

**Sonya Manners:** OK.

**Erma Lopez:** And ...

**Sonya Manners:** Let me give you a place to go.

**Erma Lopez:** ... don't mind doing the counseling that's the fun part.

**Sonya Manners:** Do you have a community college or a university in your area?

**Erma Lopez:** We do have a community college.

**Sonya Manners:** Best place to go. I've connected with my local community college and that's where I get my tutorial volunteers from.

**Bennie Roth:** Yes, also ...

**Sonya Manners:** They're called work-study students. The college paid the work study students to come to my property to help educate the children with their homework and that's something you don't have to pay for, you know, you ...

**Bennie Roth:** And also just to let – in our state, in the state of Florida, before a child can graduate high school, they must put in ...

**Sonya Manners:** Volunteer hours.

**Bennie Roth:** 40 hours of community service.

**Sonya Manners:** Correct.

**Bennie Roth:** We, in our properties, do and have a lot of that going on. They come in, they can do filing, they make copies, they do data entry and believe me, these kids are eager ...

**Sonya Manners:** Eager

**Bennie Roth:** Very eager to ...

**Sonya Manners:** They want to learn, yes they do.

**Bennie Roth:** Very eager to do so and it looks wonderful on a resume.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes, it does that they – they have to do, I think, it's 30 volunteer hours a year and if they do that consistently, they can spell out a scholarship at the end of their four-year high school to go into college. That is AWESOME to put on your resume that you volunteered, so I mean instead of trying to find the funds to do data entry or something like that check out a different source.

**Erma Lopez:** OK, thank you so much.

**Sonya Manners:** You're welcome.

**Michele Higgs:** Thank you ladies that was great.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh yes, you know ...

**Bennie Roth:** It really is wonderful.

**Sonya Manners:** ... we always think, oh we need the money to do this.

**Bennie Roth:** Yes.

**Sonya Manners:** Go after entities that's in your community that's already doing what you might want to do. Just because you're a non-profit doesn't mean that you can't partner with another non-profit. The other non-profit that I deal with is the Inkster Weed and Seed. Weed and Seed is a national organization structured by the Department of Justice and the Department of Justice started this Initiative to weed out, you know, the bad and seed in the good and it was around children. Well, when we got our Beaumont Foundation equipment, our old equipment was inadequate. It was old and antiquated. They upgraded all of our old, eight computers – well, seven of them, and purchased a new server for us. You know, half of everything that I've gotten in my center came from this other non-profit agency because they had the money, they had the, you know, whatever and they offered it to me. So that's the partnership and when you're writing those grants, they want to see that you partner with other people. They want to know that you have relationships with other entities, within your community that's doing the same thing or you're collaborating. A grant provider is not going to give you anything unless you have collaboration. Next question, maybe.

**Operator:** That is star one if you would like to ask a question and Ms, Higgs, it appears there are no further questions.

**Michele Higgs:** Oh OK, I just – I thought I heard Bennie coming in with something with regard to the Weed and Seed.

**Bennie Roth:** Oh ...

**Michele Higgs:** Oh OK.

**Bennie Roth:** No, not me.

**Michele Higgs:** OK.

**Bennie Roth:** No, I was just agreeing with Sonya.

**Michele Higgs:** Oh OK.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh yes, she did. She said yes. You have to partner. That is ...

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely. It's most important.

**Sonya Manners:** ... the most important thing. Yes.

**Bennie Roth:** Because if you ...

**Sonya Manners:** A lot of people think I'm non-profit, I can't go with another non-profit agency but you can. You really can.

**Bennie Roth:** Well, the thing about it is, is if you get the mindset that you need the money, you're going to bust your head against the wall trying to find it.

**Sonya Manners:** Correct.

**Bennie Roth:** If you realize that there are more resources and much more – that the people are willing to offer much more than just handing you a fistful of cash that's where you get your benefits from.

**Sonya Manners:** Correct, correct, correct.

**Michele Higgs:** Would you say just to put this in a sound byte that folks have to open up their vision? You know, if you're focusing on getting the money, you're, you know, beating your head against the wall but if you open up your vision to other ways that you might be able to meet the need, you might be more likely to meet the need.

**Sonya Manners:** You said it in a mouthful, Michele.

**Michele Higgs:** Thank you.

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely.

**Sonya Manners:** Absolutely because if your eye is always on the money you may not get the prize because not everyone has the money.

**Bennie Roth:** Right.

**Sonya Manners:** They may have what you need, you know and that's part of, you know, what you're going after. You're trying to accomplish your need and money may not be the answer because you could get the money and then not be able to facilitate the need. That has happened. That can happen. You get the money to hire the data entry person and you can't find a data entry person that want to work for the money that you have.

**Bennie Roth:** Right.

**Sonya Manners:** So ...

**Michele Higgs:** I guess that's definitely reality, too.

**Sonya Manners:** It is reality. It is reality but when we partnered with the local high school and the community college, it was the best thing we could've ever done. The colleges and universities have resources beyond your imagination. If you think you want to write a grant, guess what, they probably have a division in there that would help you do that. If you think you want to put together a business plan, they might have an entity in there that'll help you do that. GED programs, they have software, they have everything. Even when I thought that I couldn't get Comcast to give me my Internet access, my second choice was connecting with the local school, the school district, because the schools have cheaper Internet access because it's a school. So if I tap in with them because I'm teaching and I'm giving something to the community, I could get it at their rate or get it for nothing.

**Michele Higgs:** I see.

**Sonya Manners:** And that has happened in some centers.

**Operator:** And we actually have a question from ...

**Michele Higgs:** Great, thank you.

**Operator:** ... Renee Kiel with HUD.

**Michele Higgs:** Hello Renee.

**Renee Kiel:** Hello ladies how are you today?

**Bennie Roth:** Fine, how are you?

**Renee Kiel:** Fine, thanks.

**Sonya Manners:** Blessed and highly favored.

**Renee Kiel:** That's right. That's right. Michele, you said early on, in the call, about – mentioned something about an elevator speech and whoever has that I would just like for them to go into a little bit more detail because that's one of my things. I didn't ever think of it in terms of a speech but I kind of thought about having a portfolio prepared that has pictures and things like that that you could just open it up and kind of use that as a talking point but ...

**Michele Higgs:** Well, I may be able to help you with that but let me be sure that you finished your question, go ahead.

**Renee Kiel:** No, just a little bit more detail about the elevator speech.

**Michele Higgs:** Elevator speech, OK. Now that's something that I, actually – I am familiar with that whole concept but I saw that in this success story. And what an elevator speech is – I mean it

goes back to the old joke, if you can't write your idea on the back of a business card, you don't have an idea. And that is, you know, being able to succinctly say, you know, this is who I am, this is what I do, this is what my organization does, you know, so that if you find yourself in a situation that – like Sonya was in – of course, you probably had a half an hour on the bus, in the terminal airport but – or she probably took a half an hour.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** But if you've got, you know, those few minutes and you're going to – you're sitting at the – in an airport or you're sitting in a seat in the airplane or whatever. Something that you will be able to say that will convey what you're doing and not just what you're doing but your passion for it ...

**Renee Kiel:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** ... so that the person will be interested enough and it's a conversation starter. I mean its like, you know, walking into a cocktail party and saying hello to someone and starting a conversation. Its in those first few minutes you're conveying who you are and what you do and the import of this speech and it's called a speech in the – in the – in the article but this little presentation is that you are trying to – it's almost a sales pitch, you know.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes, it is.

**Michele Higgs:** But you also want to be as sincere as you can and I think the ladies in this conference have spoken of the word passion. And we are all in this program because we have a passion for what we do, I would imagine but being able to convey that in a very succinct way, so that you're not taking up a whole lot of time or overburdening the topic, but that will get a conversation started and then you can go further. Does that help?

**Renee Kiel:** Yes, definitely.

**Michele Higgs:** OK but that's all it is and that would lead you to, oh well, if you're interested I have a packet of material right here in my handbag and you can pass them a brochure or whatever if, you know, it's whatever you have but that is your step to that level. Yes that's your step. Does that help?

**Renee Kiel:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** OK, great, Keri, anybody else?

**Operator:** Yes, we do have a follow up from Irma Lopez with Catholic Family Service.

**Michele Higgs:** OK.

**Erma Lopez:** I did want to mention that one that we work with is the Texas Employment Commission.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh good agency

**Erma Lopez:** The Choices Program, where they place someone who is either receiving some kind of assistance, such as food stamps but we have such a turnaround that we get them trained on the computer and what we need done and then they find a job. So that – I'm very glad you told me about going to my college and that's a very good idea and I just wanted to thank you.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh, you're welcome.

**Erma Lopez:** All right.

**Michele Higgs:** OK, because you might be able to get someone who will stay around for at least ...

**Erma Lopez:** That's what I'm thinking.

**Michele Higgs:** ... to last the senior year.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes. I mean because ultimately, the person that's coming from the work agency they've actually had to go, you know, because – with here in Michigan, I work with my local employment agency also. But a lot of the individuals that have to go there are made to go there for the Work First program and because they're actually looking for employment they're not looking to volunteer, you will have a higher turnaround, unless, they just want to help. You know, if they get in where you're – and they get into what they're doing, they may continue to come back after they find employment.

**Michele Higgs:** You're right. And that's helpful, Keri, anybody on the end?

**Operator:** There are no further questions.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. One of the things that I did want to ask you ladies, there is a, and I think it's mentioned on the Web site, the Foundation Center ...

**Sonya Manners:** Oh yes.

**Michele Higgs:** ... being a group that you know has information on all and sundry, with regard to fundraising. Have either of you had any experience with that group?

**Bennie Roth:** I have not, as of yet, no.

**Sonya Manners:** I have. They actually sent us e-mails almost every month or it might be every week where they have different funding sources and it could be from any state, you just have to – it is busy and detailed. You have to really read into it.

**Michele Higgs:** Oh, I see.

**Sonya Manners:** But its very good information and that source, which is – you guys, you know, you can hook up to get their e-mails but in order to go into their server, there are libraries, probably within your area that you can go to and go into their, what do you call it, server for free.

**Michele Higgs:** OK.

**Sonya Manners:** So, I go down to our main library in Detroit, downtown, at the law library and I can go into their server for free instead of having to pay that \$500 fee, yearly fee.

**Michele Higgs:** Oh yes.

**Sonya Manners:** And you can pinpoint what you want to do. Say, you want to get a grant for after school programming. You plug in, you know, what you want to do. You plug in what state you want it in and it'll pull up what philanthropists or corporations or businesses offering grants in that area.

**Bennie Roth:** Yes, we have very similar down here, too.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes. Its – they're everywhere but you know, this is something that would cost your center but you can network to find out if the local libraries have it and it has it right there on their Web site what – where you can go to pull up their server for free.

**Michele Higgs:** OK, I want to ask another question. We've talked about communicating the goals of the organization. We've talked about identifying perspective funders. We've talked about even approaching funders, for those folks who are just coming at this, for the first time, I'm going to ask you – this may or may not be a hard question, are there steps that you would suggest they take, in terms of developing a funding strategy. And that's for either of you

**Sonya Manners:** OK. Do you want to go first or I can.

**Bennie Roth:** No, go right ahead Sonya.

**Sonya Manners:** I would suggest that they kind of stay within a five-mile radius first.

**Bennie Roth:** Three – no, I'm sorry guys, I'm in a building, I'm getting ready to go into a meeting.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh OK, to stay within a five-mile radius of their property or their center. Once you figure out what's within five miles east, west, north and south and you tap into the businesses or companies or other organizations, then you can kind of filter out of that. Go to your local business Chamber of Commerce and find – that's where you can find that information. A lot of times people register with those types of organizations or you can drive around.

Your local YWCA, your employment agency, your banks, I tell people the banks are the best place to go to because they have to put into the community, in which they're operating business out of. And they're like the best source you can go after and it may not just be for money, again, it could be for resources. We have our local bank that does workshops for us, like budgeting

workshops, financial literacy workshops and its very good, so your first step is don't go – do a mapping, an asset mapping and that is on the Neighborhood Networks Web site. It's called asset mapping and ...

**Michele Higgs:** Great, it looks like – sounds like you've talked about technical assistance with someone.

**Sonya Manners:** Well, I got a lot technical assistance from Neighborhood Networks, yes I did, yes ma'am but before I got that assistance, I realized that I was doing exactly what you guys were telling us to do. Some of it I'd done and some of it I didn't. Some of it I perfected after my technical assistance.

**Michele Higgs:** I see.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes, some of it, you know, I was like, oh I was doing that but I probably wasn't doing it right.

**Michele Higgs:** Yes, it let you know, at least, you were on the right track.

**Sonya Manners:** I was on the right track, right. So asset mapping is a good, good thing. It sounds crazy like you're going after money but asset mapping could be going after anything and we keeping saying – we've said through this whole conference call, it may not be the figure, it may be something else tangible, so the asset mapping is a good, good way to start and there is tools on the Neighborhood Networks Web site that will educate you on what asset mapping is.

**Michele Higgs:** Well, you are our best commercial for the START Web site really.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes, it is, OK.

**Michele Higgs:** Excellent. Well, one of the things I did want to get back to, the whole idea of working with the banks, in the area, in that you know, there is the Community Reinvestment Act, which I think was enacted in '77 or something.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** It does – it is a mandate that says that banks must give back to their communities and your point is very valid, in that you know, you don't necessarily have to go after money. I mean they may be able to give you computers or they may be able to give you expertise ...

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Michele Higgs:** ... like you said, in terms of the, you know, the financial workshops and all that kind of thing. Who better than a banker, you know, to offer that kind of thing?

**Sonya Manners:** Yes, home buying, you know, not to say, you know, the owner might look at it and tell you, why are you teaching these people how to buy a home? Well, guess what, apartment life is supposed to be temporary. It's not supposed to be forever.

**Bennie Roth:** Absolutely. That's absolutely correct.

**Sonya Manners:** It's supposed to be temporary.

**Bennie Roth:** We have partnered-in down here with a company called, Haven, which they are a developer – owner/builder/developer and they do nothing but low-income housing.

**Michele Higgs:** And this offers ...

**Bennie Roth:** And they have a lot of programs that they have put together, as well as, many of the HUD programs, Fannie Mae programs that they teach to our tenants to allow them and show them how easy it would be for them to buy a home instead of paying rent.

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Bennie Roth:** That money that's going toward that – is going towards something that you own.

**Sonya Manners:** It's a cycle of life, you know. You have the, you know, the baby being born and if you've got someone that has two or three babies, after a while, they've outgrown an apartment. They really need a home and what better place to go to but these developers, these mortgage companies, these banks that can help educate them on, you know, get your credit right. What to do with your credit to get it to the best score. These are some of the things that we're trying to offer to individuals because guess what, where you lose five, you'll gain six because there's six young people out there that's going to college, that don't want to buy a house just yet and they need that apartment, so it's a never-ending cycle ...

**Michele Higgs:** Yes that's ...

**Sonya Manners:** ... of what you might want to do and I have to sell that to my owners. Another good place to start, if you are in a housing organization, like an apartment community like me, start with the management company.

**Bennie Roth:** Yes.

**Sonya Manners:** Start with the management company, who is better benefiting from this center being there but the management company that's managing it, you know? You would think that they would want to put back into it.

**Michele Higgs:** Because it makes a difference.

**Bennie Roth:** I have it in my case, the unique opportunity that I not only work for the management company but I also work for the owner.

**Sonya Manners:** Right, the owners because some of the properties are owned by other entities but managed by a management company, correct.

**Michele Higgs:** Exactly, so that's an excellent position to be in.

**Sonya Manners:** Right, Right, Right.

**Michele Higgs:** Covering both ends and so there are benefits to be had, you know, by the property owners with regard to having a center on their property.

**Sonya Manners:** Right.

**Michele Higgs:** Keri have we any new questions?

**Operator:** There are no questions, at this time but I would like to remind everyone that its star one if you would like to ask a question.

**Michele Higgs:** OK, thank you.

**Sonya Manners:** Well, I think we covered a lot of ground today Michele.

**Michele Higgs:** Yes, we did.

**Sonya Manners:** I hope people were taking notes.

**Michele Higgs:** Indeed.

**Sonya Manners:** If not, you can always call Michele at ...

**Michele Higgs:** Oh right, thank you very much. Thank you very much.

**Sonya Manners:** OK.

**Michele Higgs:** I think we have just a few more minutes to complete our call; I just want to be sure that you guys feel pretty comfortable with the information that you've imparted. I think we've covered a lot of ground, with regard to, you know, where to look for money, how to look – not necessarily where to look for money but how to look for resources. Let's say resources.

**Sonya Manners:** Right, resources.

**Michele Higgs:** ... money or that could be, you know, entities, you know, where to look, how to look, you know and I also think one of the things that we haven't said and I think comes across, is that you have to be bold.

**Sonya Manners:** Oh girl, yes.

**Michele Higgs:** You cannot – you can't be a shrinking violet when it comes to, you know, you've got to be a like momma bear with her cubs.

**Sonya Manners:** I think Michele – I said it in the last conference, if you don't think that you're the one to sell what you have, there is someone in your organization or within your reach that is compassionate about what's going on, whether it be the volunteer resident, the volunteer student or the person who's doing the data entry.

There is someone within your reach that has guts about themselves or balls about themselves, excuse me if I could say that that will sell what you want and if you're not it, there is someone there that may be able to do it. I mean I get my kids, you know, well, we want to do this and if they want to do it, you've got to sell it to me. Don't just say, oh Miss Sonya we want to do this. You've got to tell me why. What we're going to get out of it and how is it going to benefit everybody, so they just can't come to me and say, oh Miss Sonya we want, we want and I'm going to give it to them. I'm the mother with a tight purse strap.

**Michele Higgs:** So you've got to think it through and present a case for it.

**Sonya Manners:** Right, you've got to present a case. They say it always, you've got to really sell it, don't just go to Miss Sonya and ask her for nothing because you've got to sell it.

**Michele Higgs:** You've got to know why.

**Sonya Manners:** Why, why you want that?

**Michele Higgs:** Exactly.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** Well, it's just good. Keri, I'm going to ask if we have any questions.

**Operator:** There are no questions.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Bennie, did you have anything else that you'd like to say?

**Bennie Roth:** No, I don't.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. I think we're going to go on and close up shop here. I want to thank both of you for coming and being with us today, Sonya and Bennie. I thank you for sharing your time with us and I thank you for sharing your information with us and your expertise. I want to remind our callers of the resources that are available through the Neighborhood Networks Initiative. Aside from the Neighborhood Networks Information Line at 888-312-2743, you'll find numerous resources on the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org), both Sonya and myself have spoken to that one.

**Sonya Manners:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** I thank you, again, for joining us for this conversation today.

**Sonya Manners:** Thank you Michele for having me.

**Bennie Roth:** Thank you for having me Michele.

**Michele Higgs:** Absolutely. This is the last in this series of calls, for this year and I encourage you to keep an eye on your e-mail for the next announcement for our October call. I have very much appreciated being your moderator for this series and I thank you, again, for your participation. Again, if you have questions about the Neighborhood Networks Initiative or the START program or any questions, in general, you may call the toll-free Information Line at 888-312-2743. Thanks again for joining us today. Take good care.

**Sonya Manners:** Good-bye ladies.

**Bennie Roth:** Bye-bye.

**Michele Higgs:** So long now.

**Operator:** That concludes today's teleconference. Thank you for joining us.

**END**